

Selections from Rand McNally & Co.'s *Handy Guide to Chicago and the World's Columbian Exposition* (Chicago and New York, 1893).

Hotels, Lodging Houses, and Restaurants

“Chicago has reason to be proud of its hotels, which are almost numberless, and year by year increase in the excellence of service and splendor of appointments. The World's Fair City stands unrivaled for its accommodations for visitors. There are at the present time about 750 hotels, large and small, with a united capacity sufficient to care comfortably for at least 15,000 extra guests. ... In addition to the above large number of hotels, there are in Chicago at the present time over 700 restaurants and cafes with a feeding capacity of at least 100,000 persons daily.”

Theaters, the Opera, and Other Amusements

“The amusements of the World's Fair City are many-sided and multitudinous, ranging from Italian Opera at the Auditorium to dime museum and dance hall; from Kinsley or Richelieu banquets to South State Street bean feasts; from Michigan Avenue promenades to pleasure club picnics; from a stroll in Lincoln Park to a midnight ramble in ‘Hell's Kitchen’, so that the men or women who cannot amuse themselves in Chicago must be confirmed misanthropes, finding no joy in life anywhere.”

Suggestions as to Shopping

“The shopping district of Chicago, *par excellence*, is the quadrangle formed by Wabash Avenue, Washington Street, Dearborn and Congress Streets, the ‘ladies’ half mile’ being essentially on State Street from Randolph to Congress Streets. In this quadrangle are the finest of the stores and shops, and on the favored promenade are wares displayed in windows which would vie in array with those of any city on the face of the globe. The wealth of material temptingly displayed is varied and great, from the sealskins of arctic Alaska to the sweet products of Southern California, from the quaint goods of China and Japan to the choice silks and lace of Italy, Spain, and France. All come to Chicago and contribute to the beauteous display made by the merchant prince of that city of many merchant princes.”

Sunday and Religious Work in Chicago

“Preaching may be heard in Chicago according to the dictates of one's own taste. The means and principal places of worship will be described below; in addition to them, irregular services may be found advertised in the newspapers, where, also the hours of meeting and many subjects of the next day's services are announced for many of the leading churches. Should the inclination of the reader lead him to go elsewhere than to church, he will find his range of indoor sight-seeing not necessarily restricted, since many of the museums, art galleries, or libraries are open on Sunday. Many of the theaters, properly speaking, give Sunday performances; occasionally some semi-sacred or benevolent entertainment is shown in the evening. The Casino, the various panoramas, and two or three other exhibitions of that sort are also open. The trains of the elevated road, and horse-cars, and cable-cars run as on week days – if anything doing a larger business.”

Art, Architecture, and Monuments of Chicago

“Curiously enough, the history of the encouragement of art in Chicago must deal with the business men of the community rather than with the artists. Even in architecture, commerce gave the artist his opportunity, although it could not give him genius; that was his own. And it is safe to say that whatever has been accomplished in building up art schools, exhibitions, and collections, and in fostering an interest in art in the community at large, is due to the men of affairs, who have thrown into this work the same energy that has built the city and made it famous.”

The Markets of the City (Stock Yards, etc.)

“While a commercial history of the world would contain many stirring chapters, and record much around which time has thrown a halo of romance, it would relate no more marvelous story than that of the rise of Chicago’s greatness. The World’s Fair City is more widely known to-day than any other American commercial center, not excepting the capital or the great Atlantic seaport. Its fame, as it has extended to other countries, and probably throughout a large part of the United States also, is, however, that of a great grain and live-stock market only, the importance of its lumber trade and the extent of its manufacturing being, for obvious reasons, less widely known.”

World’s Columbian Exposition

“The site adopted for the great Exposition of 1893 is that portion of the celebrated South Park system known as Jackson Park and Midway Plaisance. This site affords advantages which upon reflection must be appreciated and clearly understood by the practical mind. This beautiful location is within easy distance of the center of the business portion of Chicago, and is accessible by means of the most complete transportation facilities. Jackson Park has a frontage on Lake Michigan of 1½ miles, and contains nearly 553 acres of ground. The Midway Plaisance, which forms the connecting link between Jackson and Washington Parks, is 1 mile long and 600 feet wide, making an additional area of about 80 acres.”

General Information

“Admission Fee. – Fifty cents during the Exposition, from May 1 to October 30, 1893. The grounds open at 8 A. M. and close, except on special *fete* nights, at 7 P. M. On the Midway Plaisance a charge averaging 25 cents each is made for admission to the various attractions.”

“Electricity. – Seventeen thousand horse-power for electric lighting is provided for the Exposition. This is three times the electric lighting power in use in Chicago, and ten times that provided for the Paris Exhibition of 1889.”

“Power. – Twenty-four thousand horse-power of steam is provided for the Exposition. The engines are in the power-house outside of Machinery Hall.... Oil is used for fuel.”

“Hospital Service. – An efficient medical staff is at the call of the Columbian Guards, and several casualty hospitals are distributed through the grounds. A hospital launch patrols the lagoon, and every arrangement is made for the comfort of sick visitors.”